

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 NEW DE 15305 291223Z

21

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

----- 118273

O R 291134Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8744

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T NEW DELHI 15305

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, AF, UR

SUBJ: SOVIET TANKS IN AFGHANISTAN

SUMMARY: WE WILL, OF COURSE, TAKE UP THE 300 OR 800 OR 862 TANKS WITH THE GOI BUT BELIEVE WE NEED A BETTER FIX ON SOVIET DELIVERIES. END SUMMARY.

1. WE ARE PREPARED TO DISCUSS SOVIET TANK DELIVERIES TO AFGHANISTAN WITH THE INDIANS; IN FACT, WE WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO SO. AS THE DEPARTMENT SAYS, THIS IS THE SORT OF PROBLEM WE AND THE INDIANS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DISCUSS IN PRIVATE.

2. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT WE SHOULD BE IN A POSITION TO DISCUSS THIS QUESTION IN A THOROUGHLY INTELLIGENT AND RELIABLE MANNER. WE ARE VERY RELUCTANT TO GO IN WITH UNCONFIRMED INTELLIGENCE, PARTICULARLY WHERE THE RANGE OF OUR INTELLIGENCE IS SO WIDE. WE ARE UNHAPPY THAT THE INDIANS COME RUNNING TO US WITH UNCONFIRMED INTELLIGENCE ABOUT IRANIAN TRANSFERS OF US TANKS TO PAKISTAN AND DON'T WANT TO BE GUILTY OF SIMILAR HASTY ACTION OURSELVES. I WAS PREPARED TO GO INTO THE INDIANS AND RAISE BLOODY HELL ABOUT THEIR COMING TO US WITH A COCK AND BULL STORY ABOUT THE IRANIANS HAVING TRANSFERRED SEVENTY TANKS TO THE PAKS. I WAS ABOUT TO TELL THEM THAT TO MAKE SUCH ENQUIRIES OF THE UNITED STATES IS IN EFFECT

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 NEW DE *15305 291223Z

TO ASK US IF WE ARE LIARS, INASMUCH AS WE HAVE STATED

THAT SUCH TRANSFERS ARE AGAINST OUR POLICY AND OUR LAW,
AND GIVEN AN IMPLICIT ASSURANCE WHICH ANY MAN OF HONOR
WOULD CONSIDER BINDING THAT WE WILL NOT CHANGE THAT POLICY
WITHOUT INFORMING THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA. IN A WORD,
I WILL NOT HAVE MY GOVERNMENT CALLED A LIAR.

3. WE HAVE SHARED A FIGURE OF 800 TANKS WITH PRIME
MINISTER BHUTTO. PREVIOUS CABLES PUT THE FIGURE AT
862. THE DEPARTMENT INSTRUCTS US TO MENTION A FIGURE
OF 300 AND SAY THAT ANY MAJOR UPGRADING OF AFGHAN ARMOR
WOULD BE DESTABILIZING. ON THE OTHER HAND, OUR DAO HAS
BEEN IN TOUCH WITH DIA AND TELLS US THAT THE BEST ESTIMATE
OF TOTAL COMMITMENTS OF SOVIET TANKS TO AFGHANISTAN IS
100 AND THAT ONLY ABOUT 40 OF THESE HAVE BEEN DELIVERED.
FURTHERMORE, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THIS COMMITMENT FOR A
HUNDRED WAS MADE PRIOR TO THE COUP AND IS SIMPLY
BEING FULFILLED OVER A PERIOD OF TIME. FINALLY, OUR DAO
WONDERS HOW TANKS COULD BE EFFECTIVELY USED AGAINST
PAKISTAN ANYWAY IN VIEW OF THE OBVIOUS PROBLEMS OF TERRAIN.

4. IT SEEMS TO US THAT THESE ARE QUESTIONS WHICH SHOULD
BE RESOLVED, OR AT LEAST DISCUSSED, BEFORE WE TAKE UP
THE SUBJECT OFFICIALLY.

5. FINALLY, IT SEEMS SAFE TO PREDICT THAT IF WE ASK THE
INDIANS ABOUT SOVIET TANK DELIVERIES, THEY WILL ASK US
IF WE HAVE INQUIRED OF THE RUSSIANS. THIS IS WHAT WE DID
WHEN THE INDIANS ASKED US ABOUT GHANIAN TANKS. WHAT
SHOULD WE SAY?

6. IF WE ARE UNABLE TO BE ANY MORE PRECISE ABOUT SOVIET
ARMS DELIVERIES TO AFGHAN*STAN, WE WOULD BE INCLINED FOR
NOW TO LIMIT OUR APPROACH TO THE INDIANS TO A WORKING LEVEL
QUERY ABOUT THAT THEIR INTELLIGENCE INDICATES THE
SITUATION. WE WOULD SHARE OUR "EXAGGERATED" FIGURE, BUT
NOT AT THIS STAGE SHARE CONCERNS ABOUT DESTABILIZATION,

ETC. THAT COULD COME LATER WHEN WE HAD SOMETHING
BETTER TO GO ON. THE DEPARTMENT IS QUITE RIGHT THAT

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 NEW DE 15305 291223Z

THE INDIANS WILL NOT NEED TO BE REMINDED ABOUT PRESSURES
ON OUR MILITARY SUPPLY POLICY TOWARD PAKISTAN. WE DOUBT
THAT WE SHOULD RAISE THIS SPECTER UNTIL WE HAVE MORE
SOLID INFORMATION TO JUSTIFY OUR DOING SO.
MOYNIHAN

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER S/S-O - MR. TWOHIE.

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973NEWDE15305
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973121/aaaaaahg.tel
Line Count: 113
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27-Sep-2001 by martinml>; APPROVED <06-Dec-2001 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET TANKS IN AFGHANISTAN SUMMARY: WE WILL, OF COURSE, TAKE UP THE 300 OR 800 OR 862 TANKS WITH THE GOI BUT BELIEVE WE NEED A BETTER FIX ON SOVIET DELIVERIES. END SUMMARY.
TAGS: MASS, AF, UR
To: SECSTATE WASHDC KABUL ISLAMABAD MOSCOW
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005